Agreement with Myanmar

3765. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government entered into an agreement with Myanmar to secure cooperation in fighting terrorism, organized crime, narcotics trafficking, etc.;

(b) whether such agreements has been entered into with many other countries; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNALAFFAIRS (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) India and Myanmar signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the field of Non-traditional Security Issues during the State visit of Senior General Than Shwe, Chairman, State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) of Myanmar to India from October 25-29, 2004. Under this MoU, both countries have agreed to cooperate on non-traditional security issues such as terrorism, arms smuggling, drug trafficking, organised crime etc. The first meeting of the India-Myanmar Consultative Group on Non-Traditinoal Security Issues was held in New Delhi on February 10-11, 2005.

(b) and (c) Government has established mechanisms, including Joint Working Groups with several countries for strengthening cooperation to combat terrorism. These provide a framework for cooperation in various ways, including through exchange of information and assessments on terrorism, tranining and curbing drug trafficking and capacity building.

Restroration of democracy in Bhutan

†3766. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI : Will the Minister of EXTERNALAFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the King of Bhutan has indicated the restroration of democracy in his country;

(b) if so, how Government of India have taken his stand; and

(c) whether India is ready to help SAARC Nations to help in restoration of democracy in their countries through SAARC?

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) and (b) Government of India is aware that at the initiative of His Majesty the King of Bhutan, the process for drafting a written Constitution for Bhutan is underway. A Drafting Committee headed by the Chief Justice of Bhutan has prepared a draft Constitution which was released to the public on March 26, 2005. The form of Government proposed in the Draft Constitution is a Democratic Constitutional Monarchy with a bicameral Parliamentary and political parties. The Draft constitution is currently being distributed within the country for discussion and debate.

(c) Restoration of democracy and allied political issues do not fall within the ambit of the SAARC agenda.

SAARC

3767. SHRI SHAHID SIDDIQUI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether he visited Pakistan and Afghanistan, recently;

(b) whether he discussed the future of SAARC, with the Pakistani Government

(c) if not, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether India is being accused of belittling the SAARC, how it looks at the present position of SAARC; and

(e) by when would the next SAARC conference be held?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) Shri Natwar Singh, the Minister of External Affairs paid a bilateral visit to Afghanistan and Pakistan from February 15-17, 2005.

(b) During interaction with his Pakistani counterpart, they reviewed the status of our bilateral relations as well as regional cooperation under SAARC. They also agreed to work together for the early convening of the 13th SAARC Summit.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) and (e) India has reiterated her continuing and consistent comitment to the SAARC process and to increased regional economic cooperation among Member States. India is, however, of the view that it is only in an